

First-Time Freshmen in California Colleges and Universities, Fall 1997

A CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION FACTSHEET

College-going Rates of High School Graduates

While a larger number of recent California high school graduates enrolled in the state's public postsecondary institutions in Fall 1997 than had the previous fall, this growth did not keep pace with the rise in the number of graduates. The number of high school graduates increased by 3.6 percent. Overall, the number of first-time freshmen from California high schools increased by 2.0 percent. As a result, the public college-going rate of California students decreased from 54.2 percent in Fall 1996 to 53.3 percent in Fall 1997.

The number of first-time freshmen from California high schools increased at each of the public postsecondary systems. At the California Community Colleges, the number of first-time freshmen increased by only 1.9 percent, resulting in a decline in the community college going rate from 36.6 percent to 36.0 percent. While the number of first-time freshmen at community colleges increased by almost five percent over the last six years, the participation rate of students fell 1.8 percentage points due to the increasing size of the high school graduating class.

The number of first-time freshmen at the California State University increased by 40 percent over the last five years, reflecting recovery from the steep enrollment cuts that occurred in the early 1990s. As result, the participation rate of high school graduates at the State University grew from 7.5 to 9.8 percent between 1993 and 1996. In Fall 1997, the number of first-time freshmen at the State Uni-

versity increased by 700 California students. Despite this increase, the participation rate declined from 9.8 to 9.7 percent.

Similarly, at the University of California, the number of California first-time freshmen grew by 18 percent over the last six years. The college-going rate of high school graduates attending the University expanded from 7.1 percent in Fall 1993 to 7.7 percent in Fall 1996. Despite nearly 500 more California first-time freshmen, this participation rate dipped to 7.6 percent in Fall 1997.

Are California public postsecondary systems failing to accommodate the "tidal wave" of new high school graduates? Unfortunately, no useful information is available about unmet demand at the community colleges and the applicant numbers and admission rates for the university systems illustrate conflicting trends. Growth in the number of applicants to the University was consistent with the rate of growth of first-time freshmen; at the State University, the applicant pool increased by 4.5 percent, while the enrolled freshmen grew by only 2.5 percent. Declines in the admission and enrollment rates of White applicants accounted for most of this difference. However, probably the most compelling reason for the decrease in the statewide college-going rate was the decline in the number of Latino high school graduates – the fastest growing portion of the high school graduate population – who sought admission to the State's public universities. This issue is examined more closely on the reverse side of this factsheet.

DISPLAY 1 College-Going Rates of Recent Graduates of All California High Schools, Fall 1992 to Fall 1997

Fall	California High School Graduates	First-Time Freshmen						College Going Rate
		California		California State University		University of California		
		Community Colleges						
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	
1992	267,861	100,078	37.8	21,176	7.9	19,232	7.2	52.9
1993	272,800	101,072	37.1	20,595	7.5	19,297	7.1	51.7
1994	277,383	97,860	35.3	23,494	8.5	20,313	7.3	51.1
1995	280,352	103,653	37.0	25,695	9.2	21,196	7.6	53.7
1996	286,069	104,775	36.6	28,171	9.8	22,168	7.7	54.2
1997	296,281	106,744*	36.0	28,877	9.7	22,656	7.6	53.3

*Preliminary data

Regional differences

Contrary to the statewide trend, the participation rates of their recent high school graduates in several regions actually increased. The San Francisco Bay area expanded its lead by posting small increases in its community college and State University participation rates in Fall 1997. Orange County – with the second largest college-going rate – had a small increase in the participation rate of its graduates as a result of their expanded participation at community colleges. The Central Coast region – from Ventura to San Luis Obispo counties – posted a small increase in the college-going rate

of its graduates, particularly at the state's public universities. The Central Valley also posted improvements in the college-going rates of its graduates. Growth in the proportion of their graduates enrolling at community colleges and the University of California more than compensated for a small decline in their participation rate at the California State University. The San Diego/Imperial region experienced a substantial increase in the participation of its graduates in all three public systems.

Declines in the participation rates in the remaining four regions were rooted in the decreases in the community college-going rates in all of these regions.

DISPLAY 2 *Regional Participation of All California High School Graduates as First-Time Freshmen, Fall 1997*

Region	High School Graduates	California Community Colleges		California State University		University of California		Total College Going Rate
	Number	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
San Francisco Bay	54,857	21,561	39.3%	6,229	11.4%	6,092	11.1%	61.8%
Orange County	24,651	10,019	40.6%	2,297	9.3%	2,421	9.8%	59.8%
Sacramento Area	16,069	6,468	40.3%	1,459	9.1%	1,083	6.7%	56.1%
Central Coast	18,514	7,555	40.8%	1,374	7.4%	1,362	7.4%	55.6%
San Diego/Imperial	25,116	9,125	36.3%	2,574	10.2%	2,043	8.1%	54.7%
Los Angeles County	79,919	27,723	34.7%	8,767	11.0%	6,548	8.2%	53.9%
State Average	296,281		36.0%		9.7%		7.6%	53.3%
North Central Valley	15,171	6,287	41.4%	1,142	7.5%	595	3.9%	52.9%
South Central Valley	20,790	7,705	37.1%	1,983	9.5%	723	3.5%	50.1%
Northern California	11,552	3,735	32.3%	949	8.2%	386	3.3%	43.9%
Riverside/San Bern.	29,642	6,566	22.2%	2,138	7.2%	1,456	4.9%	34.3%

Participation of public high school graduates

Changing patterns of college participation among student from different racial-ethnic groups contributed differentially to the statewide changes. While the community college-going rate declined for public high school graduates from all racial-ethnic groups, Asian public high school graduates improved their participation rates at both public university systems. The participation rates of Filipino graduates at the State University increased while their participation rate at the University declined. Conversely, the participation rate of White graduates at the State University decreased while their participation rate at the University was un-

changed. The participation rates of Black, Latino, and Native American public high school graduates decreased in Fall 1997 from their levels in Fall 1996 at all three public postsecondary educational systems. The participation rate of Black public high school graduates fell below 50 percent. Only 42.5 percent of Latino public high school graduates continued their education beyond high school in a California public postsecondary institution in Fall 1997. As noted earlier, the fastest growing group of California high school graduates – Latino students – not only had the lowest postsecondary participation rates but these rates have been declining.

DISPLAY 3 *College-Going Rates of Recent Public High School Graduates by Racial-Ethnic Group, Fall 1996 and Fall 1997*

	California Community Colleges*				California State University				University of California			
	1996		1997**		1996		1997		1996		1997	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Asian***	9,625	33.1	9,828	32.3	3,701	12.7	3,967	13.0	6,278	21.6	6,594	21.7
Black	7,637	39.3	7,457	36.0	2,047	10.5	2,028	9.8	698	3.6	716	3.5
Filipino	3,796	45.2	3,532	39.1	1,380	16.4	1,488	16.5	808	9.6	828	9.2
Latino	27,770	35.3	26,330	32.1	5,956	7.6	6,092	7.4	2,511	3.2	2,489	3.0
Native Am.	1,227	53.6	1,133	47.9	235	10.3	235	9.9	184	8.0	142	6.0
White	41,432	34.2	41,518	33.3	8,670	7.1	8,568	6.9	7,045	5.8	7,273	5.8

*Estimated

**Preliminary data

***Includes Asians and Pacific Islanders
